



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency • Region 2

New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands
290 Broadway - New York, New York 10007-1866

www.epa.gov/region2

Nina Habib Spencer (212) 637-3670

Mayor Bernardi and EPA Announce \$335,000 Grant To Protect
Syracuse Kids from Lead Poisoning

For Immediate Release: Tuesday, July 25, 2000

(#00XXX) New York, N.Y. – At an event today at the Northeast Community Center in Syracuse, N.Y., Mayor Bernardi and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Regional Administrator Jeanne M. Fox announced a \$335,000 EPA grant to the city for a major initiative to reduce children's exposure to lead in public buildings in Syracuse. The announcement was followed by a visit to a home across the street from the community center, where the Mayor and Regional Administrator Fox tried out equipment that will be used in the project to identify and clean up lead hazards in the home.

The grant to Syracuse for its Lead Dust Outreach, Monitoring and Education Project was made to support the Environmental Monitoring for Public Access and Community Tracking program, or EMPACT. President Clinton directed EPA to establish the EMPACT program in 1996 to give 86 of the nation's largest cities the opportunity to provide people with up-to-date environmental information they can use every day about their health and the environment. To date, EPA has awarded \$953,000 in EMPACT funds to 86 cities in New York State, including a 1999 grant for \$500,000 to the Syracuse City School District to monitor the Onondaga Lake, and this year's lead grant.

"EPA is very pleased to support Syracuse's efforts to make the city a safer place for children," said Administrator Fox. "Lead poisoning is one of the most serious health threats to children in the nation, but it is also one that, through education and awareness, can be prevented. Syracuse has aggressively addressed this problem and we are honored to help the city take its work even further."

With EPA's EMPACT grant, the city of Syracuse will undertake a two-year program to identify lead hazards in homes and public buildings throughout the city, educate families about the threat of lead poisoning to children, and, where necessary, help families control the lead hazard. By partnering with seven community organizations, the city will

organizations (including the Northeast Community Center), the city will identify families with children in having their homes tested for lead dust. Inspectors from Syracuse's Lead Program will then visit the homes, take dust samples from surfaces in the home, and analyze them for lead levels with an X-ray fluorescence analyzer. Dust samples will also be sent to a laboratory for analysis. If significant lead levels are identified, the city will provide information to the family about how to control or eliminate the sources of dust. The local community organization will also make HEPA vacuums, designed to remove lead particles, available to families with elevated household lead levels. Results from the lead tests will be downloaded into Syracuse's existing lead database and compiled into maps and statistics, which will be posted on a website and distributed back to the community.

Syracuse's community partners in the program include the Northeast Community Center, the Southside Community Center, the Westcott Community Center, the Brighton Family Center, Girls, Inc. of CNY, the Southside Community Center and the Spanish Action League.

#